



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

August 29, 2001

Mr. Steven Cary  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Environment, Safety and Health

Dear Steven,

This letter is regarding Commitment 19 of the Implementation Plan prepared in response to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 2000-2, Configuration Management, Vital Safety Systems. Based on the conclusions reached under Commitment 18, the Federal Technical Capability Panel (Panel) has confirmed that there is not a systemic problem with the recruitment and qualification of technical personnel that are assigned to review safety systems and programs essential to systems operability. However, a problem does exist with skill gaps at some facilities.

To ensure that new technical personnel recruited for systems engineering functions and operations awareness are qualified to review safety systems and programs, the Panel will review the functional area qualification standards that are commonly used at defense nuclear facilities. Additionally, the Panel will review the Federal Technical Capability Manual, DOE M 426.1-1, for possible revisions to add a chapter on subject matter experts. If necessary, the standards and/or the manual will be revised to add competency requirements covering the review functions for safety systems. The anticipated completed date for the review and revisions is May 31, 2002.

The Panel will continue to monitor vacancies in critical technical positions and report the status to the Secretary as required.

If I can be of further service, please contact me at (505) 845-6121.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Kirkman", is positioned above the printed name.

Larry Kirkman  
Chair,  
Federal Technical Capability Panel



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